

LAOS

NEW YORK TIMES

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NEW REPORT TELLS OF C.I.A.'S LAOS ROLE

WASHINGTON, Sept. 13 (UPI)—A transcript of secret Senate testimony described today the Central Intelligence Agency's role in secretly training and supporting 30,000 guerrilla troops in Laos since 1962. The material was contained in published closed-door hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

G. McMurtrie Godley, United States Ambassador to Laos, told the committee that the guerrilla units financed by the Central Intelligence Agency, "have been the backbone of the military effort in Laos" to repel the North Vietnamese forces.

"The irregular forces in Laos today . . . number about 30,000 men," he said. "These forces are organized into S.G.U. [Spe-

cial Guerilla Unit] battalions and these battalions now comprise about 330 to 360 men each."

Last month a 23-page report was made public detailing the involvement of the C.I.A. in the Laotian war. That report was prepared for the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on foreign commitments by James G. Lowenstein and Richard M. Moosc, two former Foreign Service officers.

Mr. Godley said that the guerrilla units operated everywhere in Laos except in the area around the capital, Vientiane.

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WASHINGTON POST

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CIA Admits Training Irregulars in Laos

From News Dispatches

The Central Intelligence Agency is equipping, training and advising about 30,000 Lao troops fighting as irregular forces in Laos, it was confirmed yesterday.

The figure was given by G. McMurtre Godley, U.S. ambassador in Vientiane, in secret testimony to a closed session of the Senate Armed Services Committee on July 22. A censored transcript of the hearing was made public yesterday.

Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson told the committee that American financing of additional Thai volunteer forces supplementing the Laos did not violate the congressional ban of U.S. payment to third country troops in Laos.

The United States considered such Thai troops as local because they had severed their connections with the Thai armed forces and were under the control of the Laotian government, he said. Other sources have said that the Thai volunteers number more than 4,000.

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), who helped push through the payment ban, described Johnson's logic in labelling the Thai troops as local as "reaching pretty far out."

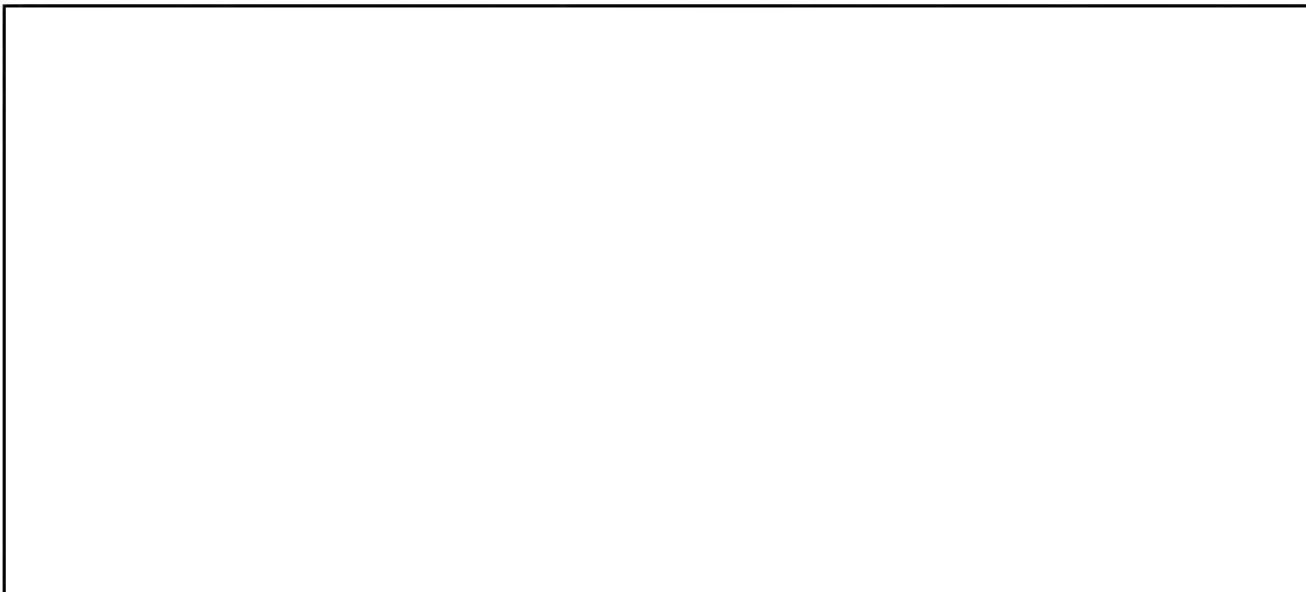
"If there are Thai mercenaries in Laos, it is the opinion of our lawyers that that is against the law," he said.

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10. (Unclassified - GLC) Mr. Wymberley Coerr, Deputy Director INR, State Department, called and asked if he could meet with us at the Agency tomorrow afternoon to discuss various legislative proposals in which we both have mutual interest. The meeting was set for 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday and subsequently changed to 4:00 p.m. Friday afternoon. 25X1



25X1D 12. (Secret - GLC) Hand-carried to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy the latest [redacted] to date).

I also alerted George Murphy, of the Committee staff, to Soviet preparations for a new underground nuclear test.

13. (Unclassified - GLC) Returned to C. B. Morrison, on the staff of Senator Allen Ellender (D., La.), the Senator's index cards on reels 1-7 of the movie film which he took on his trip abroad in 1956. Morrison said he had not located reel 7 of this film but would let us know as soon as he had it in hand.

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5. (Secret - JMM) Met with Senator John Stennis and briefed him on latest developments regarding Soviet ICBM and ABM programs and asked his advice about briefing Senator Henry M. Jackson. He said Senator Jackson should be fully briefed on these matters.

Senator Stennis asked about the effects within the Executive Branch of his letter to the President regarding Agency involvement in Laos. See Memo for Record.

6. (Unclassified - JGO) Talked to Mr. Richard Barton, Employee Benefits Subcommittee staff of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, who told me that the Subcommittee considered the invasion of privacy draft bill this morning but did not complete their considerations. The Committee will again meet on the bill next Tuesday, 21 September. See Memorandum for the Record.

7. (Internal Use Only - JGO) Talked to Mr. Albert Westphal, House Foreign Affairs Committee staff, who told me that the hearings this morning on H.R. 9637, to provide for the establishment of an American Council for Private International Communications (the RFE/RL bill), were uneventful. Discussion was on a rather philosophical note although former Ambassador Gronouski seemed to make the best impression on behalf of the Radios. Hearings will continue tomorrow.

8. (Unclassified - JGO) Met with Mr. Jack Conmy, Press Secretary to Senator Richard Schweiker (R., Pa.), who gave me a copy of the newest epistle dated 7 September from Mr. Peter M. Heller. The Senator's office had also received a previous one dated in August which contained about the same material. No action by the Agency is indicated.

9. (Unclassified - GLC) In followup on an inquiry which was made to us through the Library of Congress by Mr. David Johnson, on the staff of Representative Michael Harrington (D., Mass.), I called Mr. Johnson this morning and explained to him that the CIA authors of papers which had been printed in a Joint Economic Committee study on the Soviet economy could really add nothing to what they had already written on the subject of their articles. (Johnson had advised the Library of Congress that Representative Harrington was interested in talking to these two people.) I said that by agreement with the Chairmen of our Agency Subcommittees we did not normally make our people available for questioning for sessions such as he had contemplated.

Mr. Johnson did not press this issue but said he was interested in obtaining an unclassified statement as to why intelligence estimates on Soviet R&D could not be made public. I discussed the matter with him and agreed to talk further with our people and be back in touch with him on this subject.

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4. (Confidential - JMM) John Lehman, White House staff, called regarding Senator John Stennis' letter to the President recommending against the future funding of Laos operations through the Agency budget. He proposed an early LIG meeting on the subject. See Memo for the Record.

5. (Unclassified - JMM) Talked to Mrs. Ward, in the office of Senator Frank Church, to whom I explained the purpose of my desire for an early meeting with the Senator (with regard to his allegations of Air America responsibility for herbicidal attacks in Cambodia). She said the earliest possibility would be Tuesday, 14 September, at 2:00 p.m.

6. (Confidential - JMM) Discussed with Frank Slatinshek, Assistant Chief Counsel, House Armed Services Committee, plans for Representative Lucien Nedzi's visit to Headquarters for an orientation briefing on the Agency and the community. Slatinshek asked for an outline of what we propose and I said the Director planned a very informal session with just three or four Agency officers, which would take the form of a give-and-take discussion, and questions and answers. Slatinshek wanted something on paper, so I agreed to send him copies of the charts setting forth the organization and functions of the community and Agency components which I said we would probably use to kick off the discussion.

7. (Secret - JMM) Talked to Ed Braswell, Chief Counsel, Senate Armed Services Committee, about Senator Stennis' letter to the President and how it should be interpreted. See Memo for Record.

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8. (Confidential - GLC) [] O/DDI, received a call yesterday from Mark Wandler, of the NSC staff. Wandler was relaying a request from John Lehman, of the White House staff, for copies of "Agency fact sheets on Laos" with particular emphasis on funding. Later in the morning Mr. Maury talked with Lehman and advised him that he was forwarding material to Dr. Kissinger on this subject.

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cc:
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O/DDCI

JOHN M. MAURY
Legislative Counsel

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[] Mr. Goodwin Mr. Houston
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